# An Essay
## on
# Puerperal Mania.

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of the
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# Puerperal Mania.

In selecting the subject of Puerperal Mania it is proposed to discuss its origen and nature, its progress and its amenability to Homoeopathic remedials.

Unlike other forms of insanity that descend from one generation to another like an ancestral inheritance or whose beginnings and endings are as untracable as the colors of the rainbow, the term of this malady offers some encouragement to patient inquiry, continuing as it usually does through the lapse of only one year. In seeking the causes of this alarming affection, one cannot but be impressed with the conviction that it has its origen internal to all merely organic lesions. Derangement of digestion, suppressions and uterine irritation have ever been considered its exciting causes. Yet these may all be present and still the parturient female will not usually have any mental disturbance whatever. Hence they can hardly be counted as causes

but should be classed with the other phenomena of Puerperal Mania, such as the knobbing carotids the sleeplessness and the vacillation of ideas, as effects — with a source in common. The same objection holds good of those so called causes termed predisposing, such as the unusual excitation or depression of the passions, the terror of personal danger, the anguish of bereavement or the cruel pangs of jealousy. And especially are these accidents denied the power of predisposing to insanity when it is remembered that even when they are not present, for weeks before confinement there may be symptoms foretelling to the observant eye the probability of the accession of derangement after delivery. But no — it is in harmony with Philosophy and revelation to look back of all these for its true causes, even within the temple of the inner life, where the soul sits a presiding genius over all the phenomena of the vital forces. Here are the springs of action and

reaction, quite on the verge of matter in the human organism, deeper than arterial founts and more intangibly potent than the nervous influence.
That school of Physiology which denies the composite nature of man, has, so far as future progress is concerned, clipped its wings and fettered its feet. It has entered, with a laudable zeal and a success almost incredible, the mysterious dwelling of the spirit with cunningly devised instruments and subtle reagents. With the aid of the wonderful microscope and surpassing skill and delicacy in chemical tests, that school has demonstrated the constituents of all the fluids in the body, and the construction of its tissues by the development of cells, even pursuing matter almost to its ultimate atoms in its indefatigable researches. But the decree of "thus far and no further" has gone forth, and these learned materialists are at their wits end. It is to pure reason and the light of carefully interpreted revelation, that we must turn, if we would discover the

true nature of man. That which we see and han-
dle is not man; following all the immutable
outlines of that beauteous form and enshrined with-
in that peerless dome of thought is the spiritual
body, which by operating through the instrumen-
tality of the brain and nerves, as the air through the
reeds of an organ, fills animates and controls every
part and atom of its material kind. This
spiritual essence, conceived within the mother
and yet bearing the ineradicable impress of the
father, depends momentarily for its existance
upon the infinite and inexhaustable Fountain
of Life Gathering to itself all material and gross
elements appropriate to its form, it grows and
develops within corporeal bounds, subject for
the sake of discipline to lowly influences, suf-
fering and deprivation. But this admirable
equipoise and adjustment of matter and spirit
in the human economy is often disturbed and
the jar of inharmonious atoms is conveyed down

through all forms of vital growth, from imperceptible to gases, from gases to fluids and from fluids to solids, and man is said to be sick. This shock of inharmonious vital action, persistant and cumulative, spends its force upon the grosser elements of the body and there produces its most alarming and destructive effects. Mark the course of the lightening and see how well it illustrates this view of the progress of disease. all day long the burning rays of a July sun have fallen scarcely aslope upon the nether atmosphere, a disturbance has resulted in the particles of air, those that are heated expand and float upwards, whilst cooler ones rush in to take their place, heat changes to motion and motion takes on its cognate form of electricity, moisture is condensed from the hurrying clouds, in the upper air the thunder rolls, as the vivid flash leaps forth while below, tall spires are shivered and the bosom of the firm earth is pierced and scarred.

The course of disease then is from above downward from the higher to the lower expressions of vitality in the body: and consequently they are grievously who mistake perverted functions for the original disease and a mere effect for its cause.

Puerperal Mania, accordingly, is a complaint having a dynamic origen and involving the whole woman, from the innermost recesses of life to its grosser outgoings: "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint"

As before stated, Mania is sometimes predicable during gestation. The symptoms which at this period may excite apprehensions of the impending calamity are: unusual exuberance or depression of spirits; hysterical affections; morbid sensitiveness, with a disposition to exagerate trivial offences; irritability; suspiciousness; unreasonable jealousy; Jubile excitation with flashes of heat, quickened pulse and hot head; drowsiness with heavy lethargic sleep or unaccountable

insommolancy with frequent starting from sleep,
and an insidious failing of the memory. Its full
development usually takes place a few days after
parturition, sometimes even weeks may elapse.
It not unfrequently happens that, after a com-
paratively easy delivery, when anxiety is changed
to gladness and friends cluster to congratulate
the newmade mother manifests a sudden in-
difference to her babe, the voice assumes an un-
wonted sharpness and she looks on her husband
with coldness or plies him with abusive epithets
Through lingering days and weary nights no slum-
ber soothes the excited brain. The patient tosses in wild
delirium, talks incessantly and incoherently, often
making use of indelicate and obscene language.
She is possessed with a strong disposition to destroy
herself or take the life of her child. The lochia may
be suppressed, the milk is usually deficient and
the urine and feces are voided unnoticed in bed.
There is severe head ache, the brain often seeking

as if on fire, the carotids throb, the face is flushed and the pulse ranges from 120 to 140 beats per minute. Light is intolerable

There is a state called Melancholia, having a seemingly opposite state of the sanguiferous system. Its attack is rarely sudden, there being premonitory symptoms for several days. The pulse is weak and but little quicker than usual, the surface natural, the stomach disordered the tongue heavily coated and the bowels torpid. She is fully aware of her insanity, and has a disposition to suicide almost irresistable. She pines over imagined infringements of divine law and despairs of final salvation.

The prognosis is quite uncertain, yet it may be set down as one of the most curable forms of insanity. "Mania is more dangerous to life, Melancholia to reason." A rapid and undeviating pulse and persistant insomnolency threaten a fatal result. Under Allopathic treatment, of 92

patients admitted into La Salpêtrière in Paris during four years, there were but 5-5 recoveries. Burrows tells us that of 57 patients treated by him 35 recovered, 11 remained uncured, 10 died and 1 committed suicide. But the Homeopathic treatment has doubtless stripped the malady of many of its ancient terrors and very considerably shortened its duration; possessing as it does an appropriate remedy for each of its protean shapes it is not liable to return at a subsequent delivery if judiciously treated. It terminates either in recovery, death or permanent madness.

Treatment may be classed as medical and regimenal. It is in the medical treatment of Mania, that as Homeopathicians we enter upon disputed ground and require a perfect mastery of the means placed at our disposal in our Materia Medica and in the purest rules for practice laid down by the illustrious Hahnemann. Let the examination of the

patient be with the quietest care and thoroughness for upon the first prescription depends much of future success or failure. No symptom can be too trivial to be unworthy of notice. Let all conditions of exacerbation and amelioration receive due consideration. And as this is a disease of the mind, the mental or "moral symptoms" should hold the first rank. After what has been written in the foregoing pages as to the dynamic origen of this complaint, it might seem almost unnecessary to suggest that it should be treated with medicines highly developed by potentization. Mother tinctures and crude drugs will never cure the insane. The true physician will leave them outside the sick-room amidst the accumulated rubbish of the dark ages. Let all such gross remedial agents go to their own place along with the barbarities of the ancient school of medicine, to keep company with their counter irritants, venesection, purgatives and narcotics. But for us a brighter day is rising "with healing in his wings," to illumine the waiting nations. Who

shall stay the spreading glory! The intrigues of interest, the clamour of rage, denunciation, ridicule, and the "slow unmoving finger of scorn" have been turned against this dayspring of the 19th century. But its destiny is to be fixed henceforth in the very front of heaven. As well might they conspire to bind the sweet influences of Pleiades as to quench its brightness. It streams through barred windows into the maniac's cell, awakening the slumbering reason, and recalling the hopeless to domestic happiness and the pursuits of industry.

The following are some of the characteristic symptoms of the medicines heretofore administered in this disease according to the universal and unfailing law, Similia similibus curantur.

Aconite. Very frequently at the outset, when there is great vascular excitement, the pulse full and hard and rapid, redness of the face, restless agonizing tossing about, (the patient never lies quiet), anxiety with prediction of the time of death, delirium worse at night with ecstacy.

Anacardium. Was proved serviceable in failing of the memory. She laughs at serious things or is profane.

Aurum. Strong inclination to commit suicide.

Belladonna. If there are violent congestions of blood to the head, with internal and external heat, & distended and pulsating arteries, the eyes are sparkling, red and glistening, or they have a wild unsteady wavering look. The delirium is violent accompanied by raving, tearing beating and spitting. There are frightful visions before the eyes on closing them, she wishes to die and importune others to kill her. Her motions are very quick and her pains seize and leave her with a like suddenness. She is relieved of the distress in her head by sitting up.

Bryonia. If she is exceedingly angry and irritable, or apprehensive and fearful of death. In her delirium she is burdened with domestic

cares; her mind is ever busied with the old routine of housewifery; a veritable Dorcas she must sew and mend continually.

**Camphora.** This remedy has been very frequently given in Mania by the "old school," but sadly abused. It will prove efficacious when there is great coldness of the surface with diminished circulation in the parts most distant from the heart. The pain is only felt in a state of semiunconsciousness and seems to disappear when she thinks of it. Delirium with stupor.

**Cicuta v.** If she seems frequently disposed to play the buffoon.

**Conium m.** If the history of the case develops that at her monthly periods the mammae even either flabby and shriveled, or, more frequently swollen, hard and painful; and if at such times she suffers from stinging pains in the vagina and os uteri. If she has much vertigo, especially on turning over in bed. Her urine intermits—

flows and stops and then flows again.

Cuprum (ac. or met) When her insanity appears in distinct paroxysms. There is usually great weakness and profuse perspiration

Digitalis. When the pulse is remarkably slow; all her movements are likewise slow.

Helleborus. If there is marked seclusiveness and desire to be alone, she is low spirited, sighing. The urine is dark, with a brown sediment like coffee grounds.

Hyoscyamus. When there is a tendency to convulsions with twitchings of the muscles; great loquacity; jealousy; disposition to escape; she wishes to throw off the bed clothes and be naked.

Ignatia. Changable moods, now sad then merry, or if she has been frightened and is grieving from the fright, or has been bereaved.

Lachesis. Great loquacity, she flies from one subject to another and even desires others to talk too; deep dejection; nervous, irritable; foamy urine; all her symptoms are worse after

sleep, especially the siesta.

Mercurius S. When there is much saliva from the mouth and she plays with it and is full of all such disgusting tricks. Profuse perspiration with excessive thirst, desire for stool is no effect, or if she have mucus and sanguineous discharges.

Opium If she has been frightened and retains a continual sense of fear, or if she is in a Lethargic drowsy state, or is full of sleep and yet wakeful.

Palladium. Has symptoms very similar to Platinum, but she suffers from continually mortified pride, without the slightest cause, or she grieves because of an imagined loss of social position.

Platinum. If there is a puerile blank think blood from the uterus, in her paroxisms she utters loud shrieks, objects appear to her smaller than they really are, she thinks herself great

and everything else very small and low; pride and overestimation of herself. Nymphomania, obstinate constipation.

Pulsatilla. Is especially suitable for slow phlegmatic, good natured temperaments, easy to laugh or cry; she longs for the open air; twilight exacerbates her symptoms; shifting pains extremely nasty pappy taste in the morning; she has religious melancholy, prays often and is overanxious about the salvation of her soul; she is pleasant, timid, mild and affectionate.

Nux vomica. Is suitable for women of a fiery excitable temperament, whose menses have been too early and too profuse. She is morose, stubborn, angry malicious, quarrelsome and faultfinding.

Stramonium. If she desires light and society, whilst darkness and solitude set her almost frantic, exceedingly talkative, violent rage; if she have a red, bloated face with a

smiling silly expression, profuse perspiration.

Sulphur. Insatiable appetite, heat on the crown of the head and cold feet, an exalted, ~~happy~~ frame of mind — sleeping and waking she is exquisitely happy; though in plain attire her garments are coronation robes or the pure and white linen of the angels, she wakes in the night and sings; if seized with a destructive mood the shattered mirror falls in a shower of bright diamonds. Her visions are all extatic — even amidst the wreck of nature, she fancies herself the presiding queen of fate and floating on rosy clouds, bedecked with flowers, far above the universal ruin.

Veratrum Will prove very useful if there is a sudden sinking of strength, continuous great debility and trembling; every little effort brings out a cold perspiration on the forehead; the pulse is thread like, scarcely perceptible; mania with desire to cut and tear everything.

circum. She complains of an intense obstinate pain in the brain, of which she cannot rid herself.

The regimenal treatment of the patient requires the gravest consideration, as many questions will arise of an embarassing nature that have not yet been satisfactorily answered. In the early stages of Mania it is of the highest importance to enforce strict seclusion and restraint. Interviews with friends now only serve to increase the sufferer's bewilderment and agitation, by exciting efforts at recollection, altercation, and desire to escape wholesome surveillance. But when the storm of acute delirium has subsided and there remains simply abberation of mind with no great derangement of the general health, the propriety of removing her to an ordinary Asylum for the Insane is in most instances to be questioned, especially since it places her, in our day at least, quite beyond the

Homœopathic and only rational treatment for diseases of the mind. If the means are at command, would it not be better to afford her a pleasant and retired suite of rooms with grounds for open-air exercise, and some agreeable companion of judgement and tact, capable of exercising a gentle moral control, and of directing her mind into channels of quiet amusement and occupation. Let her be led according to her natural tastes to music drawing, writing, knitting or embroidery; or or what is better than all for both mind and body, the sweet delights of horticulture. Give her to feel that she is not a maniac, requiring bolts and bars, the strait waistcoat, the iron-cayed bed, the unwilling stimulant, the drastic purge, the sopor of opiates or the enforced strangulation of the bath at the hands of ignorant and soulless hirelings; but only a delicate invalid in whose behalf all are laboring with loving

assiduity. Chase away every gloomy cloud with expressions of hope and assurances of a speedy return to maternal and household duties. The advantages of a pleasant journey cannot be overestimated.

Let us remember in the treatment of this, as well as of every other disease, that we belong to a reformed system of practice, and not follow blindly and unquestioningly in the footsteps of the "old school." Long enough have the chilling shadows of their mad-houses darkened the land. Too long already have they put off the day of deliverance for the deranged and said to them, "For thee the field has no medicinal leaf, And the vexed are no mineral power."

The true disciples of Hahnemann are abroad in the earth and right must ultimately triumph.

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